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Finding Progressive America

The conventional wisdom says that one of the problems with liberals is that their constituency is too urban, too black, and too poor. But a Progressive Review study of where liberals hold congressional seats suggests this description is misleading to both friends and foes of the progressive cause.

We examined liberal, conservative and moderate states according to a number of factors. Liberal states were defined as those with two liberal senators or one liberal senator and a majority liberal House delegation. Moderate states were those with one liberal senator. Conservative states were all others. Liberalism was defined as a score of 70% or better on the 1988 ADA voting record. No distinction was made between the sizes of the individual states because we were looking for demographic variations within ideologies rather than their aggregate effect at the voting place. For example, the assumption that liberalism is simply an eastern or bi-coastal phenomenom is clearly challenged by the maps on page 3. Similarly, the urban/black/poor decription does not fit such varied places as Vermont or North Dakota.

In fact, most of America is urban. About two-thirds of Americans live in cities or towns. Even in states like Montana over half the residents are classified as urbanites; in Utah the figure is 84%. And conservative and moderate states are only slightly less urban than liberal ones (9 and 5 percent less respectively). What is different about liberal states is that their cities are larger. Here is the average size of the five largest cities in each category:

Liberal states: 308,600
Moderate states: 188,900
Conservative states: 203,800

In other words, the average city size of the moderate and conservative states was less than two-thirds that of the liberal states. Significantly, there have been studies that have shown that both the per-capita costs of a city and its violent crime rate rise disproportionatly once population exceeds about 250,000.

This disparity in city size raises the interesting question of the degree to which liberal urban policy is (or is seen to be) directed towards the needs and culture of the larger, older, less managable cities at the expense of smaller urban America. In fact, the very term 'urban' suggests to many LA or New York City and rarely does the liberal rhetoric specifically address the concerns of towns or small cities despite indications that Americans are increasingly seeking out such places.

Evidence of this can be found in another major difference between conservative, moderate and liberal states. Conservative and moderate states are growing much faster, 51% and 31% respectively. What is attacting people to these places and why do liberals and progressives have so little to say to them?

The "too black" characterization falls in the face of the fact that conservative states on average are 31% more black than liberal states. The average black population of conservative states is 10.5%, while in liberal states it it is 7.3%. Liberal states also have the lowest percentage of latinos.

It is true that liberal states have more people on welfare, but -- at the same time --they are, on average, the wealthiest states, albeit not by much. Conservative states have a median income 4% below that of liberal states while moderate states have a median income 6% lower. The average welfare population for liberal states is just over 7%, for conservative states just under 5%.

In many other respects, there are no major differences between liberal and conservative states. These include percentage of blue collar workers, percent of population with a college degree, percent of elderly and amount of crime.

There is, however, one other difference worth noting. Conservative and moderate states have a siginicantly higher proportion of their territory devoted to farming. This can affect the politics of even urbanites in those states, because of the role of

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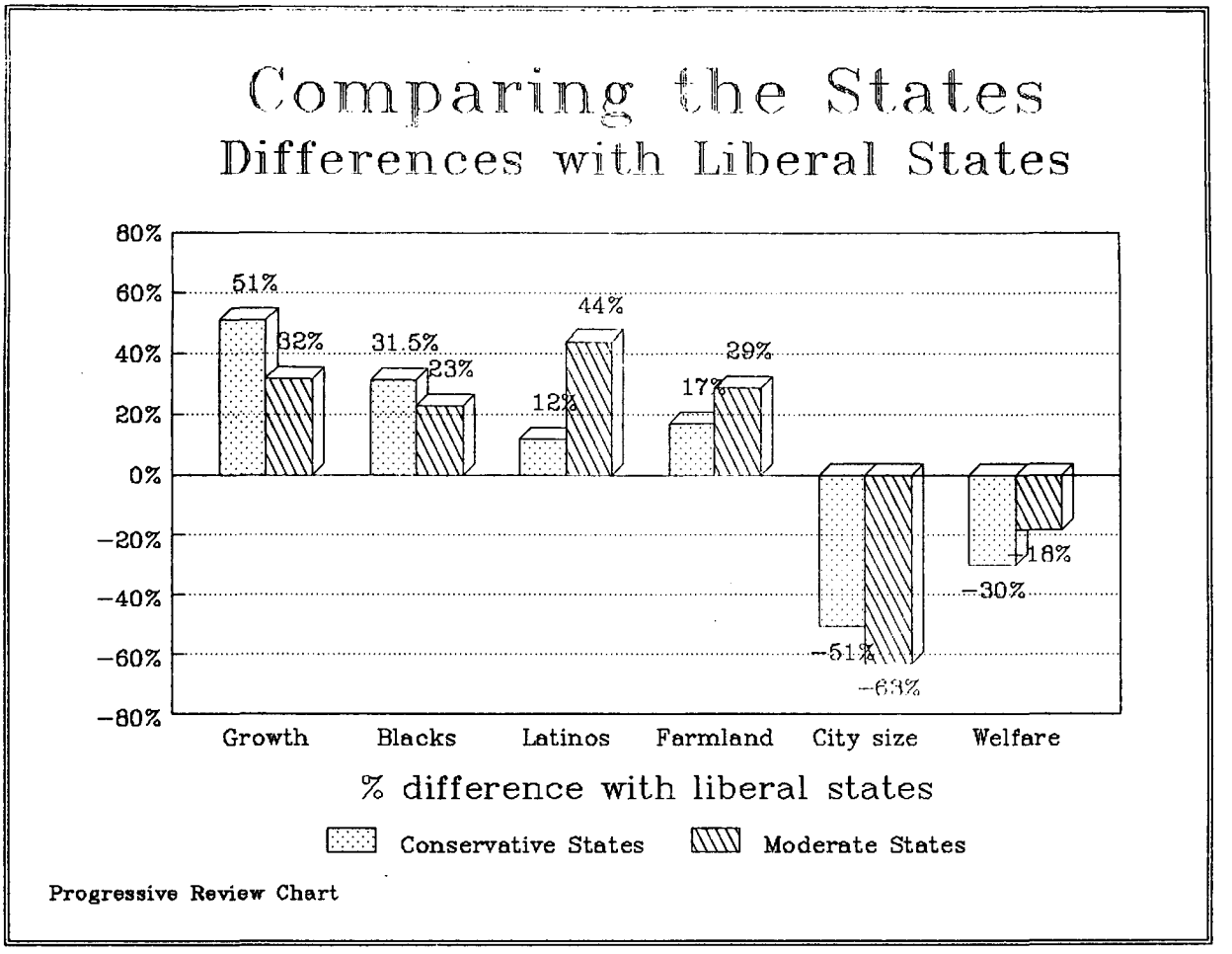

This chart shows how conservative and moderate states differ with liberal states in a number of significant ways. Chart shows the percentage difference with liberal states. Factors illustrated are growth rate, % of blacks, % of latinos, % of state used for farmland, % of population on welfare, and average size of five largest cities.

farming in the local economy and a cultural empathy with farmers that may come from proximity. Interestling, farm policy has not been a major concern of liberals in Congress with obvious exceptions of people like Iowa's Tom Harkin. ADA, for example, included no farm issues in its 20-vote scorecard last year, while including two involving gay rights.

Thus, it would appear that liberals have their greatest strength in older America, slow growth America, big-city America. Although ideologically more future-oriented than their conservative opponents they are not reaching Americans who have actually moved to seek a better future. They are not speaking to Americans who are enjoying the satisfactions and suffering the problems of growth. To the degree that they have defined their constituency within the same limits given it by conservative critics, they have been involved in a self-fulfilling prophecy.

To get out of this trap requires not so much an ideological change as a change in priorities and rhetoric. For example, a strong case can be made for making housing, health care, education and the environment the top progressive issues for the simple reason that, handled well, they would be extremely popular.

Progressives must also concern themselves with such presently down-graded issues as those of planning for new growth, the problems of smaller cities and towns, the needs of small business and farm policy.

None of this means giving up traditional liberal constituencies, although mention of reaching out to new groups is often seen as a threat by these constituencies. There is no conflict between being pro-housing and pro-choice; there is, however, serious problem for politicians identified primarily for their stands on a few highly controversial cultural issues. The easiest way out of this is to make housing and health care, for example, more important issues in the public's mind. Barney Frank may well survive the current tempest, not based on a judgement of his sexual activities, but because the people of the 4th District know other issues are more important and that he handles them well.

Montana and Ohio, North Dakota and New Jersey, Arkansas and Masachusetts have striking dissimilarities. But when their senators get on the floor they vote together more often than not. In this lies considerable hope for progressives, if they expand their self-definition and seek new constituents as well as serving old ones. It means, however, ending an almost snobbish disregard for the politics of those who have expanded the progressive constituency -- from Tom Harkin to Doug Wilder, and ending the infatuation with big, old city style liberalism. Ultimately, the question is not whether there remains an untapped progressive constituency but whether liberals and progressives will have the energy and courage to find it. -- *S.S.*

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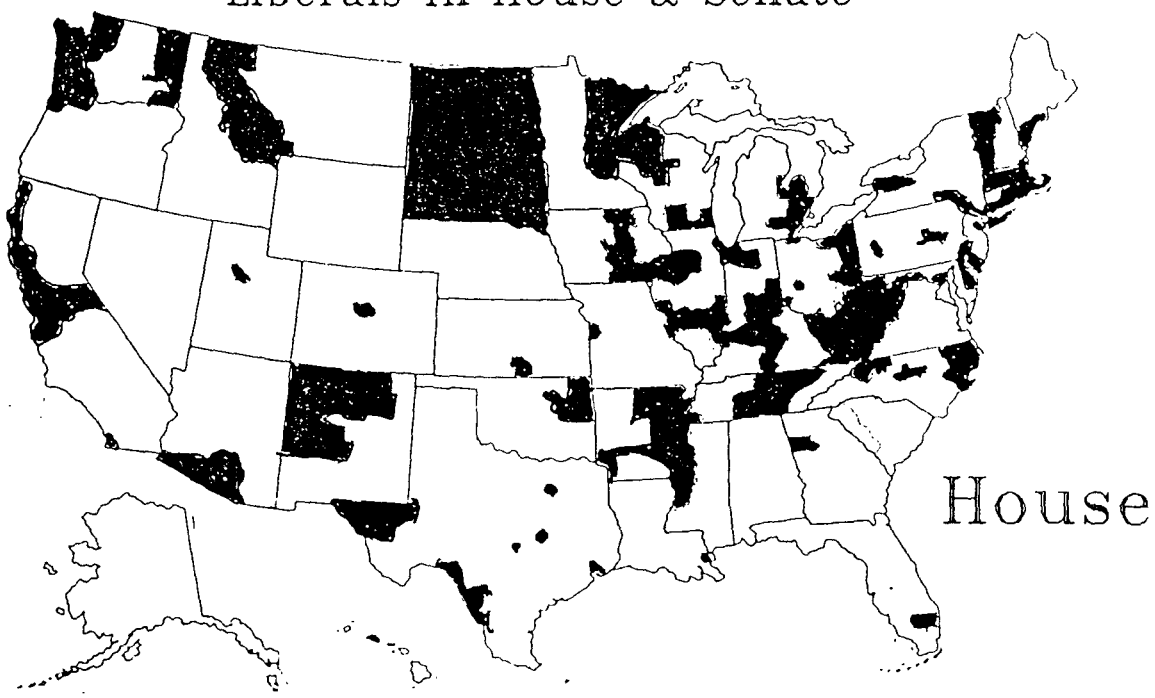
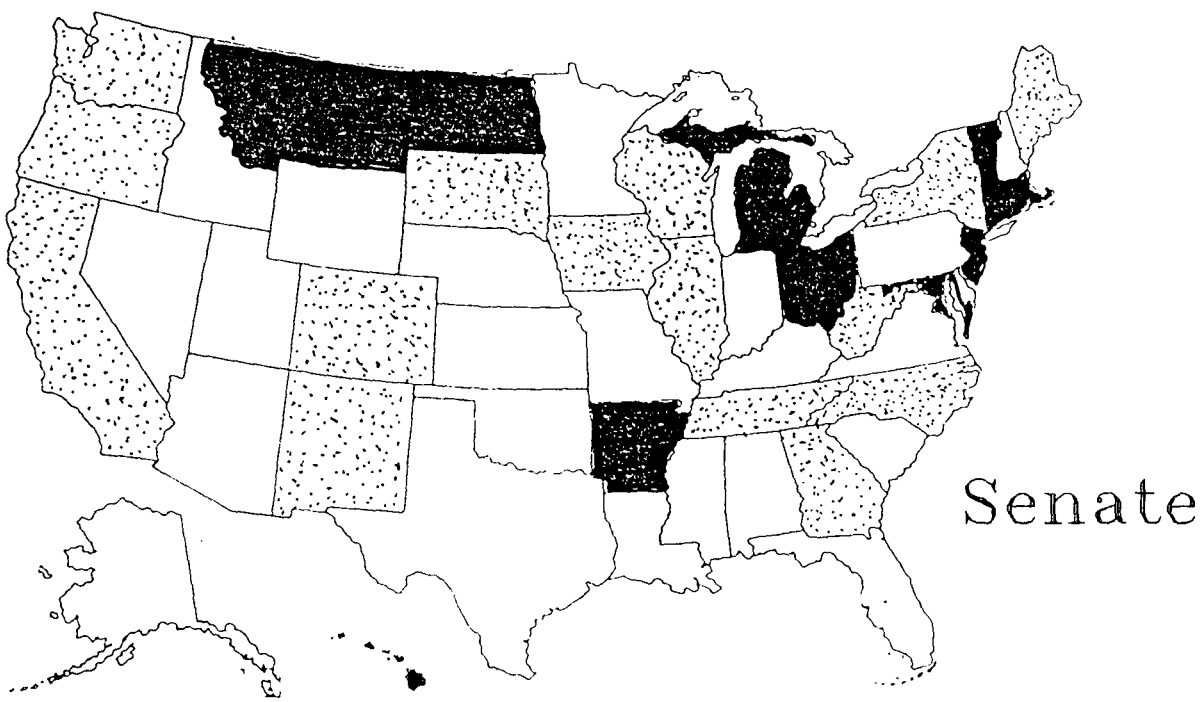
Progressive America

Liberals in House & Senate





These maps show the location of congressional districts with liberal members and states with liberal senators. The senatorial map shows states with two liberals in black, those with one in shading. Liberalism based on 70% or better rating in 1988 ADA voting record.

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Housing when?

In 1945 more than a million Americans were living doubled up with other families in the midst of a critical housing shortage exacerbated by returning veterans. The Truman administration responded in a fashion that would boggle today's White House, the Congress and maybe even Mitch Snyder. By December of that year residential housing starts were up more than twice that of the normally peak month of June. And by the fall of the next year over 700,000 units were under construction and 300,000 had been completed. Harry Truman had used, or tried to use, every tool at his command, from persuasion to rent control to the now venerable veterans program.

Today, the situation is somewhat different. In the midst of another housing crisis, housing starts dipped in 1988 to their lowest level since 1982 and are still down there. The Department of Hustlers and Unscrupulous Developers has run up losses in the hundreds of millions of dollars in what is probably the largest government scandal in American history. Everyone expresses concern about the homeless -- but nothing happens.

This change in our ability to do what we say we want to do about housing didn't just happen with the advent of the Reagan administration. The 1968 national commission report on the riots noted that over a thirty-year period the federal government had subsidized about 650,000 units of low-cost housing, while at the same time providing hidden subsidies, such as cheap interest and tax breaks, for ten million units of middle and upper income housing.

Back in 1937, Thurman Arnold in his class *Folklore of Capitalism* imagined how the attempted rescue of Amelia Earhart would have gone had it been done in the manner of a public housing project:

First, plans would have been made for the use of the best planes to search the ocean. Then, when this extravagance was attacked publicly, cheaper planes would have been used. By the time that this device had received condemnation for inefficiency, the rescue would have been changed from a practical, efficient endeavor to a public debate about general principles. Everyone would have agreed that people in distress must be rescued. They would have insisted, however, that the problem was intimately tied up with balancing the national budget, improving the character of people lost at sea, stopping the foolhardy from adventuring and at the same time encouraging the great spirit of adventure and initiative and so on ad infinitum. They would have ended perhaps by creating a commission to study the matter statistically, take a census of those lost at sea, examine the practices in other countries. What was saved in airplane fuel would be spent on research so that the problem could be permanently solved.

Tom Lantos, chair of the committee that is looking into the HUD scandal, said the other day that there is no shortage of ideas about housing; there is, however, a lack of will to carry them out. But it is actually worse than that: we have created an intricate procedural and philosophical maze through which our will must pass when and if we develop it. We have in many ways, and the housing example is only one, developed a system that defies our own intentions.

The best way out of this predicament is to return to first principles, namely our original goal, which in this case means getting some housing built. It is not an impossible task, nor even an inordinately expensive one over the long run. It only becomes so if you simultaneously attempt to provide sinecures for retired members of your administration, pay off major campaign contributors, justify the trickle-down theory, pay homage to the myth of free enterprise while putting its adherents on the dole, and satisfy the baroque needs of a government housing bureaucracy which can't even get us back to where we were in the late 70s. (In fact, if housing starts had stayed at that level during the Reagan years, we'd have about 3 million more homes today.)

There are few less risky places for the government to spend its money than on housing. If it loans the money, it can have solid collateral. If it has equity in the property it can even make a profit. If it gives the money wisely, it can extricate itself from future social costs such as welfare and crime.

If, on the other hand, it loses sight of its declared intent and the housing program becomes a savings & loan welfare program, a developer subsidy, or a perk for contributors we can find ourselves in precisely the mess that Rep. Lantos and his colleagues are investigating, a mess, incidentally, that both the media and the Vichy Democrats in Congress assiduously ignored until it wouldn't keep quiet any longer.

Of course, you have to spend some money up front and, of course, the Reagan administration didn't. In 1980 we were spending $1 for housing for every $7 we spent on

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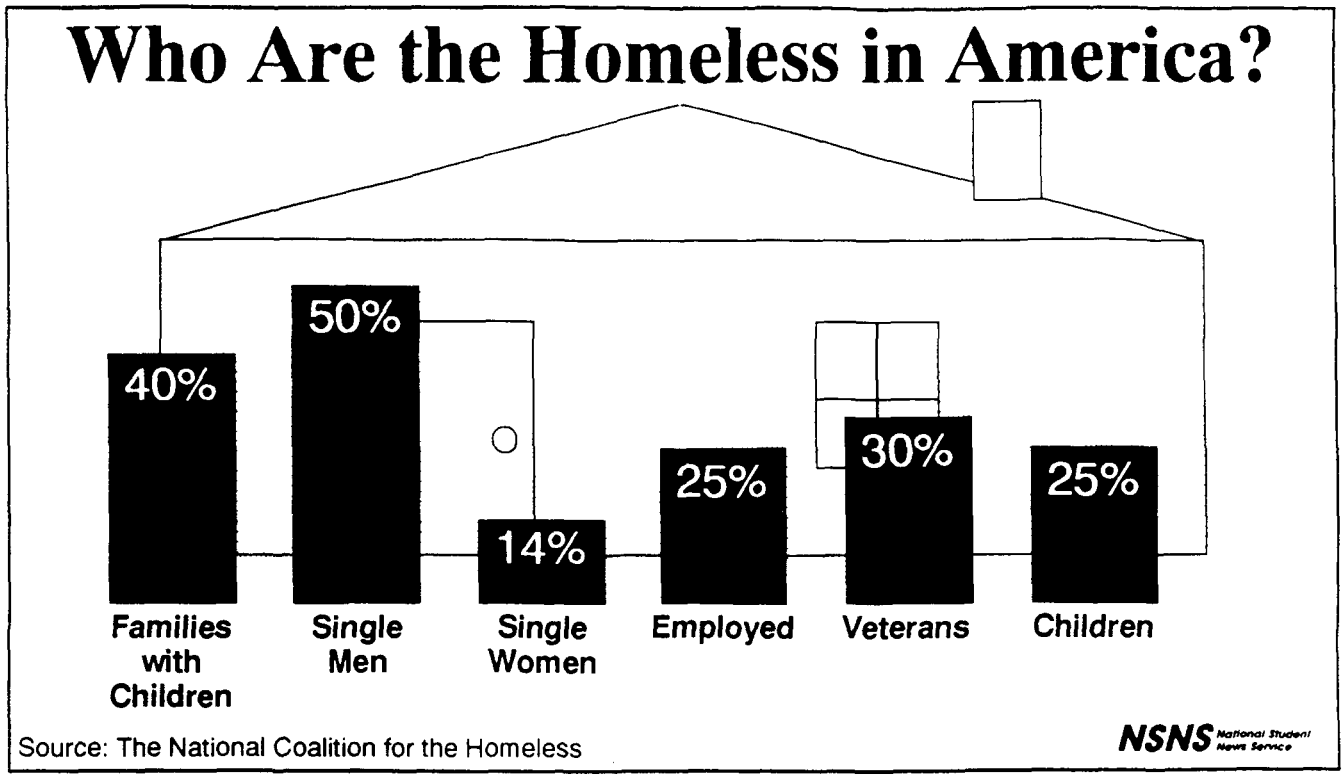

defense. By 1988 we were spending $40 on defense for every dollar on housing. Federal assistance for housing dropped from $33 billion in 1981 to under $8 billion in 1988. Hence the $25 billion increase demanded by the recent housing protest.

But as Sam Pierce and friends have proven beyond doubt, money appropriated for housing does not have to be used for housing, nor for the right sort of housing. It can be used, by way of recent example, for horse stables and for restrooms in baseball stadiums. And while progressives are very confident in calling for a substantial transfer of funds to housing, they are far less clear on how it should be used.

The question is critical, but uncomfortable for liberals, because it threatens their cherished notion that government is unrelentingly benign given enough money to do the job.

In fact, an extraordinary amount of any government program is eaten up by the mere overhead of its existence. Other funds are absorbed by what might kindly be called the holistic imperative. By the time funds for any purpose make their way through Congress and out of the White House they have been raided for a plethora of other purposes, a classic current example being the attempt to solve substance abuse while simultaneously providing public housing, education and so forth. When Jack Kemp went to Congress the other day to ask that a higher percentage of community block grant funds be designated for low-income housing, he was told bluntly by a number of representatives that the money was needed for other things. such as (one can imagine) local porkbarrel for big developers.) Add to this the funds that are outright stolen, and it makes your auto body shop look like a charity.

The easiest way to lessen these phenomena is to minimize the government's structural involvement in housing and emphasize what the government does especially well: serving as a traffic cop for money. This we should have learned from some our most successful efforts, such as social security and earlier major home loan programs. What people need most for housing is money. What builders need most is people who need housing but have money.

There are many ways this money could be provided efficiently. A number of them would require the government to compete with the financiers but so be it. Any industry that swipes a couple of hundred billion dollars from the taxpayers to bail out its mistakes can't yell too much about free enterprise.

Here are just a few of the ways we could have a housing policy that made a difference:

- Establish a federal housing bank that would loan money to rich and poor alike, but at different rates. The profits from the former could subsidize the loans to the latter.
- Establish a major loan policy modelled on the VA program for low and moderate income persons, specifically including the young who will now, on average, be 32 before they can buy their first house. After all we are all, veterans of the Reagan administration's war on us. To make this program reach the largest number of people, it could focus on providing second trusts, picking up where conventional mortgages leave off.
- Develop a program in which the government helps to purchase homes in return for shared equity in the property. The government also gets to share the profits when the house is sold.
- Develop mutual housing, a policy which has provided West Germany with one-third of its housing since the end of WWII. There are several varieties of mutual housing, which basically results, as Robert Kutner noted in *The New Republic,* in a "rent-controlled apartment but without a private landlord." Under one proposal being pushed by Chester Hartman and others, the government would pay the capital costs of the unit, the housing would be owned by a non-profit organization, and the unit could never be sold for a profit. Hartman estimates that the government cost of such a policy would be $5 billion per 100,000 units. To give

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some idea of the potential, if we had used $25 billion on such a program in 1988 we would have increased housing starts in this country by one-third.

● Redirect tax breaks. The government, thanks to deductions for mortgage interest, subsidizes middle and upper income housing at a rate about four times that for low income housing. Joseph Riley, the mayor of Charleston, has suggested that some of this money be retrieved by the government at the time a house is sold and that the money be redirected into other housing programs.

● At a local level, affordable housing could be quickly and cheaply expanded through the relaxation of housing codes *(See Pr #270 April 88)* to permit granny flats in existing single-family residential homes. At the present time, local zoning laws prohibit accessory apartments in about 60% of country. These apartments could be built for an average of less than $25,000.

In short, there is plenty that we would do if we proceeded with energy rather than with rhetoric and avoided archaic shibboleths about the free marketplace. As one critic noted -- the HUD scandal has amply demonstrated -- the American economic system provides socialism for the wealthy and free enterprise for the poor. -- *S.S.*

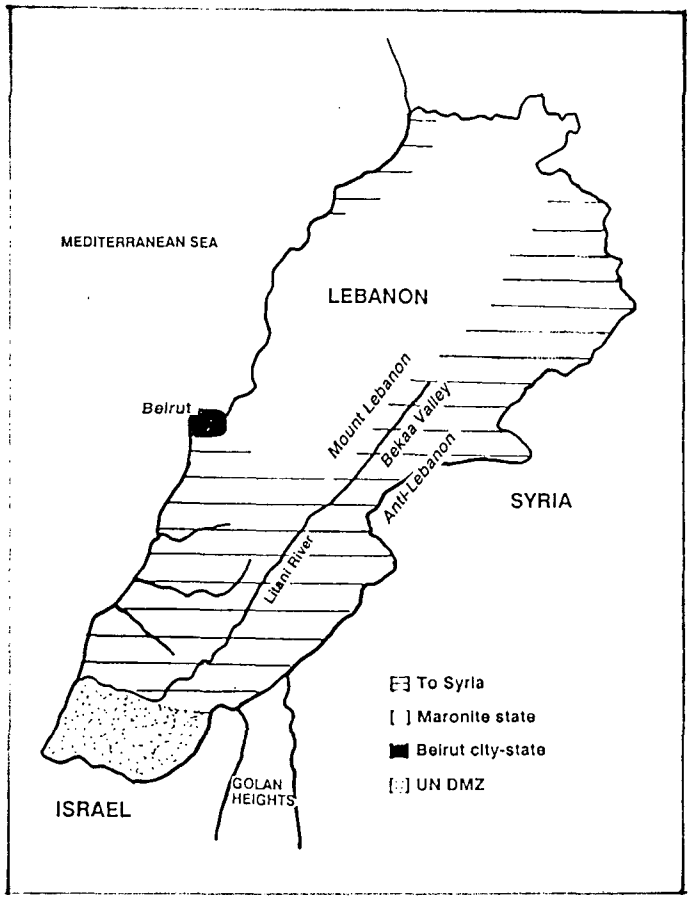
The last days of Lebanon?

Thomas S. Martin

It doesn't take a genius to see that Lebanon is doomed. Much of the little country has long been occupied by foreign troops. Beirut is a charnel house, a city of zombies where murder, car bombings and kidnappings are hourly occurrences. The shifting religious and political factions are often mere marionettes for outside powers, their battles handy substitutes for direct confrontation. Every world leader and organization, from the United Nations to the Archbishop of Canterbury, has tried to find a solution. But what they all overlook is the simple fact that Lebanon *itself*, the very existence of the republic, is at the root of the problem.

There is no historical, religious, ethnic or geographic reason why there should be a Lebanon. It was a creation of last gasp European imperialism, one of those hybrid states that was put together to satisfy the diplomatic strategies of the great powers, with no thought given to the aspirations of the unfortunate people that actually had to live there. The days of imperialism, when a handful of rich exploiting nations could manipulate the rest of the globe, have now passed. But vestiges like Lebanon remain to trouble and embarrass a new and different world order. The only way to end strife in Lebanon is to end Lebanon itself.

Geographically, Lebanon consists of a coastal plain dominated by Beirut; Mount Lebanon, a thirty-mile-long massif; the narrow Bekaa Valley, a northern outlier of the Great Rift; the Anti-Lebanon, another mountain range which (with Mount Hermon) separates Lebanon from Syria; and a rolling southern region bordering on Israel. The entire republic is only about four thousand square miles, smaller than Connecticut. The people are almost all Arabs but are deeply divided by religion. We can only estimate the relative sizes of these religious communities, since the government -- for reasons of political compromise -- has not conducted a census since 1932. The Maronite Christians, about one-third of the population, live on and around Mount Lebanon. Together with Greeks, Armenians, Syrians and other varieties of Christians, they dominate the social and political life of the country. In the Bekaa and the south the Muslims are most numerous. The majority are moderate Sunni but there is a large community of militant fundamentalist Shiites who are currently fighting among themselves. The clannish Druze are also gathered around



This map shows Lebanon with the author's proposed partitions

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the Mountain and may be eight per cent of the population. Of course there are no definite boundaries between any of these groups, and they intermingle in a particularly complex way in the city of Beirut.

The history of "Lebanon" begins with the Organic Regulation of 1861, which granted the region autonomy within the Ottoman Empire. The move was forced on Istanbul by France, then involved in an imperialist struggle with Britain for hegemony in the Middle East. There was a Christian governor appointed by the Sultan and an advisory council representing the other communities. The system worked well under French guidance until World War I. During that half-century France imposed its economy and culture on the "Lebanese" people, and Beirut became the "Paris of the Levant." There was peace and prosperity; France had its foothold in the Middle East, and the "Lebanese" enjoyed the benefits of western civilization. The Druze, Maronites and Muslims submitted to the new order primarily because it kept them away from each other's throats. During the first World War Ottoman authority was briefly re-established, but the Turks were on the losing side and by 1919 the French were back, stronger than ever. The whole area was now reconstituted as Greater Lebanon, with Beirut, the Bekaa and the coastal plain incorporated into the former autonomous region that had centered on the mountain. In 1923 the League of Nations gave France a mandate over both Lebanon and Syria. The Maronites, who by now had imbibed much Gallic culture, overwhelmingly dominated the mandate, though they were not the majority. The Muslims, more than half the population, resented French rule and rightly perceived the idea of "Lebanon" as absurd. They wanted to join an independent Arab Syria. To preserve Lebanon, the French and their wealthy supporters (Christian and Muslim) designed the constitution of 1926. It provided that the president of the emerging republic would always be a Maronite, while the speaker of the Chamber of Deputies must be a Shiite and the Prime Minister a Sunni. Such is still the case today. Early in World War II Vichy France controlled Lebanon, but when it was "liberated" by the Free French and the British, both Syria and Lebanon were declared independent.

"Lebanon" was now a fact, but no political fiat could create a "Lebanese people." For more than twenty years the little country was relatively peaceful, an oasis of capitalist prosperity in a troubled region. The precarious balance of Christians, Muslims and Druze held, because as "Lebanon," the people could enjoy the material benefits of good relations with France and Britain, and because Syria -- which the southern Muslims had wanted to join -- was not doing so well. Still, there were coups, outbreaks of sectarian violence, and several American military interventions, all exacerbated by the Cold War and by the successive Arab-Israeli conflicts. Lebanese politics continued, as always, to be a matter of rivalries among the prominent families -- Chamonns, Shihabs, Jumblatts, Gemayels, Helous, Karamis and others. Then in 1967 the Israeli seizure of the West Bank of the Jordan and the Golan Heights drove hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees into neighboring countries, including southern Lebanon. A new, large and volatile factor had been added to the unstable equation of Lebanese politics.

Over the years Israel had pretty much left Lebanon alone, but now the vast refugee camps and the presence of the Palestinian Liberation Organization made Lebanon a major concern for the Israelis. Soon after the Six-Day War, Arab terrorists based in Lebanon launched their deadly campaign, and true to its eye-for-an-eye policy Israel always struck back. Unfortunately civilians as well as PLO guerrillas often died under Israeli bombings and strafings. An ominous precedent had been set. Syria, of course, leaped to the defense of its Muslim brethren in southern Lebanon and the camps, as did other Arab states. Since at least 1969 Syria has been the principal backer of Palestinian organizations in Lebanon as well as the self-appointed protector of the native Muslims.

The Yom Kippur War of 1973 sent more thousands of refugees into camps like Sabra and Chatila, which were now evolving into permanent, blighted slums. Yasir Arafat's PLO found the camps fertile recruiting grounds. Here amid the lean-tos and the burned-out truck carcasses was born the legend of "The Return." Today about half a million Palestinians live -- if one can call it that -- in Lebanese camps. They are about fifteen percent of the population but are not citizens and are either feared or ignored by the natives. Only a few miles from the Sabra and Chatila camps, where hundreds were massacred by an Israeli-backed Christian militia in 1982 and where thousands now starve, millionaires ski on the slopes of Mount Lebanon. In Beirut itself uprooted families huddle in the ruins of bombed-out tenements. One is reminded of the futuristic America of Paul Theroux's *O-Zone,* where wealthy "Owners" isolate themselves in shimmering towers while the unlucky majority scrabble in the dirt for survival. In Lebanon, that future is already here.

In contrast with most civil wars, the sides in the Lebanon struggle have never been clear-cut. Alliances shift with dizzying rapidity and every faction seems bent on destroying every other faction. The PLO is a wild card. The United States and Israel agreed in the late 1970s to keep hands off, as long as Syria stayed north of the Litani River, where it could not pose a direct threat to the Jewish state. Between 1976 and 1982 the situation grew daily more violent and more confused. In 1980 Syria signed a pact with the USSR and Soviet military aid began pouring in, making the region a potential stage for superpower confrontation. In 1981 Menachem Begin, the onetime Irgun terrorist, became Prime Minister of Israel and the retaliation bombings of Palestinian camps were stepped up. With the co-operation of Saudi Arabia and the United States, the UN arranged a cease-fire that held for almost a year. But then in June 1982 the PLO assassinated the Israel ambassador in London. The plot was traced to the Lebanese camps, and within a few days the Israeli invasion was on.

Israel and its Maronite allies under Bashir Gemayel quickly conquered all of southern Lebanon and encircled Beirut. In August President Lias Sarkis asked the PLO to leave the country and admitted a new multinational peacekeeping force. By the end of August 1982 hundreds of Palestinians had been hustled out, scattered across the Muslim world. It seemed as if the PLO had been uprooted and permanently crippled. At the same time Bashir Gemayel was elected president but was assassinated before he could take office. The Christian factions promptly chose his brother Amin to take his place. Between the autumn of 1982 and the 1988 elections two new factors radically altered the picture. The PLO gradually crept back in and has recovered much of its strength since Arafat's peaceful overtures toward Israel.

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And militant Shiite factions under various names have been seizing hostages at a record rate. The Jihad Islami, which was responsible for the bombing of the US Marine barracks in 1983, holds a number of hostages; so does Hezbollah, the "Party of God" linked to Iran. Some hostages have been held for several years and others have died, somewhere in the blitzed labyrinth of West Beirut. It was President Reagan's well-meaning but befuddled attempt to help these hostages that landed him in the Iran-contra scam.

At present Lebanon has no government, or several governments, depending on how one looks at it. After the Parliament failed to elect a president in September 1988, the Syrians tried to put the aged former president Suleiman Franjieh back in office. Parliament refused. Amin Gemayel stepped down, bequeathing his powers to Michel Aoun, the Maronite commander of the army. Nabih Berri's Amal supports Aoun, but most Muslims instead look to Salim Hoss, Gemayel's prime minister, as the head of Government. The two cliques actively work to undercut one another, and there are factions within the factions. In a word, political solutions have failed. A fragmented Lebanon is now controlled by various military forces backed by Syria, Iran, Iraq, Israel, and the West.

It is not difficult to see that the balkanization of Lebanon is well under way. The various ethnic and religious factions still occupy their respective territories, as they always have, though they overlap in complex ways. There is no longer any real obstacle to the partition of Lebanon. The Gordian knot at the center of it all is Beirut. The usual references to "Muslim West Beirut" or "Christian East Beirut" are highly misleading, though the "Green Line" may yet become an international border. Hafez Assad's decision to send a 7000-man force into the capital was a major step in his plan for a "Greater Syria" and will certainly accelerate the breakup of Lebanon. Though Iraq has recognized Aoun, most other nations have been unwilling to take sides in the current crisis. The Arab League, Eduard Shevardnadze, the "Committee of Six" and others have tried unsuccessfully to mediate. Arab leaders long viewed Lebanon as a Middle Eastern Switzerland, a safe haven for investments and summer homes, and are not yet willing to surrender. The western powers have been remarkably quiet about Syria's role. Perhaps they are afraid to tackle a key Soviet ally; perhaps they prefer a peace engineered by Syria rather than by Iran; perhaps they have simply given up on Lebanon.

And perhaps the time has come for the world to do just that. The most important fact in the republic's history is that it has never been a real "nation." It is simply a geographic region occupied by many disparate ethnic entities, and that is how we should approach the problem. Lebanon is an artificial creation of the age of western imperialism. That age has passed; Lebanon should pass too. Beirut as an independent city-state might once again rival Paris. Hong Kong will soon disappear as an enclave of high-tech capitalism; perhaps Beirut could apply for the job. Lebanon south of the Litani might be demilitarized under UN control, giving Israel a much-desired buffer. The Bekaa and the region between the Litani and Beirut, occupied mostly by Sunni Muslims, could reasonably be part of Greater Syria. Mount Lebanon and the coast north of Beirut should become a Maronite state. The Druze are too scattered to form a united polity, and in any case they probably don't want one. They have done very nicely for centuries as a privileged minority in several Middle Eastern states. If the bulk of the Shiites are absorbed into Syria or settle in Beirut, the need for an Iranian presence should be obviated.

One big obstacle would remain: the half-million Palestinians. This, in the last analysis, is Israel's problem. Some kind of Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza is essential to the long-term peace of the Middle East. With the Lebanon problem solved, perhaps a more moderate Israeli government -- under American pressure -- might at last opt to do the right thing.

Thomas Martin teaches at Sinclair Community College in Danton, Ohio.

Weather Report

Headline in the *Providence Journal:* "Destruction Moves Bush." We were wondering what it would take.

Public Citizen reports that the accumulated radioactivity in the nuclear waste generated in the US has doubled since 1980 and will increase by another 50% by the year 2000.

According to the Potomac Valley Green Network, the per capita meat consumption of the average Costa Rican human is less than that of the average North American housecat. PVGN also reports that substituting a fluorescent light bulb for an incandescent one can keep a half ton of CO2 out of the atmosphere over the useful life of the bulb.

It looks like we'll have to wait awhile longer for a drug-free America. In August, George Bush called for "victory over drugs," but by late September, high administration officials were telling the *New York Times* that "an all-out effort to get large numbers of addicted people off drugs *** is not being planned: that aim, they said is too complicated and the problems in reaching it are too intractable to be achieved anytime soon."

The FBI has settled an 11-year old lawsuit by admitting that it investigated and disrupted the activities of the National Lawyers Guild going as far back as 1958. The FBI acknowledged that it engaged in warrantless searches and wiretaps, checked the organization's garbage and passed information to bar admissions committees. No apologies yet, however, for recently revealed FBI infiltration of the Earth First! movement as reported last July 25 in the *Village Voice.*

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Field Notes

The RICO law was designed to catch gangsters and racketeers in a mushy legal web centered on ill-defined conspiracies. Recently, hgowever, the Supreme Court has let stand the use of the statute to prosecute Philadelphia abortion protestors. And in West Hartford, Conn., the editor of a county newspaper has been charged under the law for writing an editorial that criticized police behavior during an anti-abortion demonstration. John Spear of the *Orange County Post* has, according to a suit filed by the town of West Hartford, "actively supported the illegal activities of Operation Rescue through [the press]" and that his editorial was designed "to extort a more favorable response" from the police the next time there was an anti-abortion demonstration. His editorial, it was further maintained, was part of a "pattern of racketeering activity." The town is equally contemptuous of the civil liberties of the actual demonstrators, accusing them of "resistance to arrest" by going limp and of "using court processes" to pursue their conspiracy. West Hartford is the town that has been using police torture techniques on demonstrators of a variety we usually only export to authoritarian allies.

Winners of the Playboy Foundation's tenth annual First Amendment Awards include writer and blacklisted broadcaster John Henry Faulke, whistleblower lawyer Tom Devine of the Government Accountability Project, and Eve Pell for her work with the Center for Investigative Reporting.

Students in Western Massachusetts are on the move against Coca Cola, which continues to do business in South Africa. Their technique, if it catches on, may have more impact than the diffuse divestment campaigns. The students are opposing the sale of Coke in dining halls and in vending machines. National Student News Service reports that Mount Holyoke has added Diet RC Cola dispensers, and two other colleges -- Hampshire and Amherst -- have removed Coke products from their campuses. The problem with divestment campaigns is that there is always someone to buy the stock that is divested. But a sale lost is lost forever.

From Walter Truett Anderson in Pacific News Service: "Professor Joshua Meyrowitz of the University of New Hampshire thinks that electronic media have changed society far more than we realize. In his book, *No Sense of Place,* he argues that radio and television reorganize life, weaken the connection between physical place and place as we actually experience it. We still think geographically, and talk geographically, but we may be member of 'communities' that have no geographic basis at all, and we may be spectators at events anywhere in the world. And so millions of people who have never been to San Francisco or Oakland tune in to follow games between two teams that came from somewhere else, with players that came from somewhere else, with hometown spectators who came from somewhere else. We root, root, root for the home team, and never suspect that we are all playing a new ball game."

Alternative charities are expected to raise $105 million in 1989, up from $38 million in 1982, but still far behind the $2.8 billion raised by the United Way. The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy says there are now over 100 alternative funds in the country soliciting for some 2,0000 charities.

Global March for a Livable World: *Beginning on Martin Luther King Day, a group of several hundred activists will leave LA on a cross-country trek to educate and motivate people in environmental consciousness. They will be demonstrating low-wattage lightbulbs, watersaving appliances, recumbent bikes, drought-resistant trees and more. Info: Global Walk, Box 10255, Calder Square, State College, Pa. 16505 (814-355-8023)*

Earth Week 1990: *Twenty years after the pivotal Earth Day 1970, ecologists around the country are preparing for a big event next April 22. You can get information on Earth Week by writing the Chesapeake campaign committee at 602 Woodbine Terrace, Balt. MD 21204*

Earth Care Paper: *A mail order company that specializes in products which are designed to have minimal impact on the environment. They sell cards, stationary and gift wrap. Info: Earth Care Paper Inc., Box 3335-GRN, Madison WI 53704 (608-256-5522)*

Green programs: *The autumn issue of the Green Letter is one of the best compilations of current green thinking on a variety of issues. $1.50 from Green Letter, PO Box 14141, San Francisco CA 94114*

Human Rights: *A new directory from Orbis Books. Covers books, organizations, periodicals and more.*

Latino America is growing rapidly reports the Census Bureau, up about 37% since 1980. Latinos now represent 8% of Americans, with two-thirds of them living in just three states: California, Texas and New York. Mexicans represent about 62% of the latino population.

While Americans continue to buy into much of the misbegotten "war on drugs," there are signs of a changing view. A recent poll by Media General-Associated Press found that six in ten respondents thought providing treatment for drug users would accomplish more than punishing them. Fifty-seven percent believed building more federal prison cells wouldn't help and while 65% would favor spending more on law enforcement, 80% wanted more funds for treatment and 91% more funds for education.

A sad farewell to Hersay news service, which we have been using frequently and productively for over a decade. The service, published by the Women's News Institute, is folding due to a shortage of funds and volunteers.

Cynical nomenclature of the month: The Democratic right, led by the likes of Sam Nunn and Charles Robb, have got

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their own think tank and they're calling it the Progressive Policy Institute. Seymour Lipset, one of the new pseudo-progressives, says the word *progressive* makes a lot of sense since it is a more popular one than either *liberal* or *conservative*. Using this logic, suggests Erwin Knoll of *The Progressive* magazine, "why not call the institute *Diet Coke?* That label is even more popular than *progressive.*"

The Soviets may be easing up on their use of psychiatry to control dissidents but not the US Department of Energy, which allows its contractors to require employees to submit to psychiatric exams. Guess who gets targeted? Whistleblowers, according to the Government Accountability Project, which is helping several whistleblowing nuclear employees who have been subjected to the treatment.

Lance Wilson, of HUD and Paine-Webber fame, was earning over $300,000 within a few years of employment with the latter firm. HUD investigator Rep. Tom Lantos wanted to know whether this sort of salary leap was normal at PW. Executive veep James Treadwell Jr. replied that according to a check of salary levels, Wilson was only about the 560th highest paid person at the firm.

The Justice Department has gone on the counter-offensive against the proliferation of nuclear-free zones, filing suit against Oakland, CA, on the grounds that its NFZ is unconstitutional. The local law prohibits the production, storage or transport of nuclear weapons, their components or radioactive materials in and through the city. Oakland has a Navy supply center and a regional headquarters of the Department of Energy.

Two issues ago we mentioned a Woodward & Lothrop ad that treated the Christian cross in a remarkably secular fashion. One of our readers wrote Woodies to complain and got back a letter that included four paragraphs of apologies about what was described as "this delicate issue," i.e. Christianity. "We made a grievous mistake!" and so forth, declared Joel Nichols, divisional vice president for advertising. Must have hit a nerve.

The North Carolina Yam Commission is changing its name after discovering that the state produces no yams, only sweet potatoes.

When it was pointed out to Texas gubernatorial candidate Jack Rains that his ten point education program only contained nine points, Bains replied, "You just pointed your finger and emphasized the problem we're trying to resolve."

The *Washington Post* made $42,700 in profits per employee last year, but still can't come to an agreement with the Newspaper Guild. The guild has gone almost three years without a contract.

Writing of the plan to buy the Nicaraguan elections with funding from the National Endowment for Democracy, the *Washington Post* blithely noted that "several problems remain. For one thing, the Endowment charter calls for it to further democracy on a nonpartisan basis..." Well, that sort of thing hasn't bothered us in the past. Meanwhile, Holly Sklar, writing for the American Friends Service Committee, says that if you just add up the *overt* aid being proposed for buying the election, it comes to $3.50 for every Nicaraguan, of voting age or not. That would be like spending $900 million to buy a US presidential election, about ten times as much as Bush and Dukakis got in legal aid.

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